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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iran Iraq, Elections and 9/11
Darfur
PARIS - Friday, September 01, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iran
Iraq, Elections and 9/11
Darfur

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Ambassador Stapleton who hosted a preview last evening of a France 2 television documentary on 9/11 is prominently featured in Le Parisien, which relates the "high level of emotion" in the audience, including the Ambassador, who "lost two friends in the tragedy."

A wide variety of stories make today's front pages, with domestic economic and social news topping international reports. Le Figaro is the exception with the lead story devoted to a foiled terrorist plot in Morocco, alleging that terrorists who infiltrated the highest

level of government were planning to attack "the symbols of power," tourist sites and domestic and foreign high officials.

Iran continues to be a major international story. In Le Monde, the editorial contends "time has come for determined action and unity to deal with Tehran's posturing." Maurin Picard in Le Figaro says Iran "is sticking to its guns." (See Part C) Francois Gere of the French Institute for Strategic Analysis, is interviewed in Le Monde, Le Parisien and Le Figaro and says "America's approach is heading for an impasse. Threatening without following through is useless. The discrepancy between the high level of threats and the limited means we have to implement them is very dangerous... France's position of a dialogue with Iran is more realistic." An op-ed in Le Figaro by Francois Heisbourg of the Foundation for Strategic Studies echoes Gere when he says "coercive measures against Iran must be used with caution... We must avoid handing Iran anything it might use against the West. (See Part C)

President Bush's mid-term election speeches are noted by Philippe Gelie of Le Figaro as a "mix of Iraq and 9/11" in the President's "fight for an ideology." (See Part C)

The Donors Conference on Lebanon is reported. Both Liberation and Le Figaro mention that 900 million dollars have been pledged for Lebanon's reconstruction. TF1 noted that "the allocation of money will be tightly controlled." Radio RTL quoted PM Fouad Siniora who said that "Hezbollah will not get any money."

Europe's involvement in UNIFIL, but also in the negotiations with Iran, leads Le Figaro to entitle a report "Europe on all fronts" as the EU-25 FM head for an informal conference in Finland on Saturday: "It is with their heads held high that the chiefs of Europe's diplomacy head to Finland. Proud of having been able to pull together thousands of men for UNIFIL, they will try to decide on a strategy to end the impasse with Iran."

Liberation devotes a major article to Darfur and the "Blue Helmets on their Way to Chaos." Le Monde reports that President Bush is proposing a bilateral meeting with the Sudanese president on the margins of the UNGA in New York. With this meeting, Le Monde says, "the US is trying to push hard" on the Darfur issue. In Le Figaro, the report says "Ambassador Bolton was able to keep his word... about a resolution to replace the African forces. But the arrival of the Blue Helmets is dependent on Khartoum's goodwill." (See Part C)

Le Figaro Economie carries a report entitled "Transatlantic Controversy Over Airline Safety" rising costs and the negotiations underway between Washington and Brussels to determine who must bear them. The article says that "flights to the U.S. might be disrupted because of an imbroglio between the two capitals... over the personal passenger data airlines must give Washington... According to Brussels, the U.S. administration is taking advantage of the renegotiations under way to demand even more information."

La Croix devotes its lead to France's renewed attraction for tourists. In Le Figaro Economie, one report is entitled: "American Spendthrift Tourists Are Back in Paris." Le Figaro Economie carries a short profile of "American style" Clara Gaymard who is taking over as CEO of GE France. The report recalls her previous position promoting French investments in the U.S. and American investments in France.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iran

"Against Iran's Nuclear Ambitions, Coercive Measures Must Remain Cautious"

Francois Heisbourg in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/01): "While Iran says it is open to negotiations, it has for the time being opted for rejecting the West's offer. Three things are at risk here. The UNSC's authority risks being undermined, because resolution 1696 implies coercive measure in the event of non respect by Iran... The future of non-proliferation depends on the outcome of the crisis... because the precedent created by Iran having the bomb carries many more consequences than is the case for Israel or Pakistan... Last, it is the entire equilibrium of the Middle East which is in the balance... It is therefore gratifying to see that under these

circumstances, nations like Russia and China sided with the Europeans and the Americans... But it is less certain that this unity will prevail after August 31st... The invitation made by the U.S. Ambassador John Bolton to America's allies that they can impose sanctions outside the framework of the UNSC is counter productive... Strategically, such international alignment would be exactly what needs to be avoided: 'the West against the rest.' The only viable way out is to build the unity that prevailed until now... and to ask ourselves the question of whether new measures decided by the UNSC have a chance of reaching their goal. We must remember that Iran does not totally ignore the international community and that a united front may well work. And so, before saying that sanctions will not work, we need to explore all avenues. But, if we must resort to more coercive measures, we must be careful not to hand Iran anything it might use against us. America and Great Britain's mired situation in Iraq is a great source of strategic weakness towards Iran. Conversely, the deployment of European soldiers in Lebanon will be additional points of pressure on Iran through Hezbollah."

"Faced with Iran"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its unsigned editorial (09/01): "For several weeks French diplomats have been insisting on the need to dialogue with Iran... such solicitude is certainly not justified by the reality of the situation. In Lebanon, Iran continues to try to provide weapons to Hezbollah and to denounce Resolution 1701... On the issue of its nuclear program, Iran has shown no intention whatsoever of conforming to the demands of the UNSC... For months Iran has been hedging, shirking its obligations and refusing any gesture of good faith... There may still be time for diplomacy, especially considering that the Bush Administration is incapable of launching a new offensive in the Middle East. However the unity of the UNSC on the issue is far from being a given. The situation in Lebanon has changed the context... The deployment of 2000 French soldiers... puts French diplomacy at the mercy of Iran's mood swings. To acknowledge this publicly and explain that the Iranian nuclear issue could impact the security of the European troops in Lebanon would contribute to shedding light on the situation... In order to maintain a semblance of credibility, the great powers are now forced to take action. The August 31 deadline is passed, now it is time to discuss sanctions on Iran."

"Iran Sticks to Its Guns"

Maurin Picard in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/01): "President Bush has asked for 'consequences' in response to Iran's attitude. Meanwhile Tehran's trade partners, Russia and China, are dragging their feet about further sanctions... and the EU-25 ministers acknowledge the failure of their strategy of incentive."

Iraq, Elections and 9/11

"Bush Puts Iraq in the Campaign"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/01): "President Bush is opting for a new approach. Instead of speaking about the increasingly hard to pinpoint progress in Iraq, he is insisting on the vital stakes of the 'global war' on terror. This is a risky wager on his part, but the last one he can rely on. While there is little hope of making America forget about Iraq two months before the mid-term elections, his stance is to turn a handicap into an asset... In a new series of speeches, President Bush is lumping together 9/11 and Iraq in one 'decisive ideological war for the 21st century...' Other speeches, intended to coincide with 9/11 commemorations and the UNGA are expected to pave the way for the mid-term elections on November 7. This is the third time in one year that the President has launched a PR operation of this scale... But this time there is an obvious shift in the rhetoric: 'successes and reversals' in Iraq are mentioned only in passing, while the gist of the debate focuses on fundamental challenges... such as terrorism, which remains the number one concern for most Americans... Hence the mix."

Darfur

"Waiting For Khartoum's Green Light"

Jean-Louis Turlin in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/01): "Ambassador Bolton was able to keep his word... about a resolution to replace the African forces. But the arrival of the Blue Helmets is dependent on Khartoum's goodwill... The UN resolution sends a message which is

both firm and conciliatory to Sudan. It is firm in that it sets a definitive calendar for the new deployment, which can resort to force to protect local populations. The conciliatory element resides in the obvious desire for dialogue with the Sudanese authorities on the hyper-sensitive subject of the transition... Meanwhile according to Jan Egeland, the region is on the brink of a new catastrophe... For Ambassador Bolton, 'silence' from Khartoum is to be interpreted as consent. About the negative messages coming from Khartoum, the American Ambassador adds: 'one must distinguish between rhetoric and facts.'

"In Darfur, the Blue Helmets on the Road to Chaos"

Christophe Ayad in left-of-center Liberation (09/01): "Despite Khartoum's opposition, the U.S. managed to pull off its efforts at the UNSC... Ambassador Bolton is convinced that despite its stance, once it is facing the fait accompli, the Sudanese government will play along... Indeed, despite its bellicose and anti-West rhetoric, the Sudanese regime has always shown flexibility when its survival is in the balance. In the end, after more attempts to play for time, it will accept the resolution." STAPLETON